

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

## CHANGES IN THE MEDICARE PART B PROGRAM FOR FEHBP MEMBERS

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mr. BORSKI. I rise today to express my concern about the proposed changes in the Medicare part B prescription drug benefit program for our Federal employees and retirees.

Effective January 1, 1996, many Federal retirees receiving medical benefits through Blue Cross/Blue Shield will be forced to obtain their prescription drugs from mail-order drug companies or be required to pay an additional 20 percent copayment for their prescription drugs acquired from their neighborhood druggist. As a result, over 1 million of our Nation's seniors may no longer be able to afford to have the convenience and security of receiving their prescription drugs from their neighborhood, preferred-network pharmacies.

On January 1, Federal employees and retirees who receive retail pharmacy benefits from the Medicare part B program of the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program [FEHBP] Blue Cross/Blue Shield standard option will no longer have their 20-percent coinsurance drug deductible waived if they choose to receive their drugs from their local pharmacy. Only those members who receive their prescription drugs through mail-order drug companies will be entitled to retain the waiver available under current law. As a result, many of our Nation's retired Federal employees will no longer be able to afford the safety and convenience of receiving their prescription drugs from their neighborhood druggists.

Mr. Speaker, by raising the cost of prescription drugs by 20 percent, Blue Cross/Blue Shield is economically forcing many of our Nation's seniors into receiving their prescription drugs from anonymous mail-order drug companies. By removing trusted, local druggists from the picture, Blue Cross/Blue Shield is creating a potentially dangerous situation for many of our retired Federal employees.

First, Federal retirees, like most senior citizens, use prescription drugs more frequently than any other age group. Many of the drugs taken by the elderly are so dramatically important that should a senior citizen mistakenly forget to reorder his or her medication, or accidentally spill the medication in the sink, the consequences of not being able to acquire or afford immediate replacement of the prescription would be life threatening.

In addition, senior citizens are more likely to be taking multiple drugs at the same time. Many seniors require the face-to-face attention and recordkeeping provided by pharmacists to ensure that their medications are being properly administered and that there are no adverse reactions among their prescriptions. However, unlike community pharmacies, many mail-order firms do not maintain complete patient medication records, which means that they cannot check for or prevent any potential serious medication problems.

A recent study by the U.S. General Accounting Office [GAO] entitled "Prescription Drugs and the Elderly" noted that health practitioners are in agreement that in order for our Nation's elderly to receive safe and effective care, physicians, pharmacists, and patients should all participate in the drug therapy decisionmaking process through increased communication. However, mail-order prescriptions do not allow this type of face-to-face communication and accurate recordkeeping which is essential to prevent dangerous mistakes with prescription drugs.

Finally, Blue Cross/Blue Shield has stated the proposed elimination of the prescription drug waiver for Federal retirees was a result of "working hard to create a balance between providing an overall comprehensive benefits package for [its FEHBP] members and keeping [its] premiums competitive."

However, this decision seemingly ignores the fact that increasing the medicinal risk to many seniors by removing local druggists could have a drastic effect on the health care costs for everyone. According to the GAO study, nearly one of four ambulatory elderly patients were taking prescription medication in an inappropriate manner which led to unnecessary adverse reactions and higher medical costs amounting to \$20 billion a year. By further increasing the risk of medicinal accident to the elderly, there is no estimate as to the likely increase in medical costs.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, considering the unnecessary risk that would be imposed on many of our Nation's retired Federal employees as a result of a simple cost-cutting measure, it is unwise and inappropriate to place the protection of the neighborhood pharmacist out of the economic range for many of our Nation's retired Federal employees.

## A TRIBUTE TO CLEVELAND ROBINSON

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Cleveland Robinson, leader of District 65 of the United Auto Workers Union in New York City who recently passed away. Cleveland Robinson committed his life to economic justice and racial equality. As a union representative, he fought to improve the lives of the mostly black and Hispanic New York City autoworkers whom he represented. Committed to racial justice in the United States and internationally, Mr. Robinson also served as the administrator chairman of the 1963 March on Washington and helped to bring American Labor into the fight against South African apartheid. Mr. Robinson's commitment to justice was deeply held and his contribution to social justice was great.

In memory of Cleveland Robinson and in tribute to the ideals for which he fought, I

would like to enter into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following excerpts from a statement by Bernice Powell Jackson from the Civil Rights Journal.

No one could attend Cleveland Robinson's funeral, held at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, and not be awed. There was the grandeur of the church, the power of the African drummers leading the procession and there was the procession itself. In it were Jesse Jackson, Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, David Dinkins and Harry Belafonte. In it were labor leader like Bill Lucy and Owen Bieber and union members whom Cleveland Robinson had spent a life-time representing. In it were church leaders and civic leaders and Robinson family members. In it were the Consul General and Ambassador from Robinson's native Jamaica. It was an awesome moment.

Cleveland Robinson's name is not a household word. Yet, he was a man whose unswerving commitment to the working people of our country led to the improvement of the lives of the 30,000 mostly black and Hispanic workers in small shops and department stores whom he represented. He was a man whose dedication to fighting injustice, especially racial injustice, led him to be a loyal and fearless supporter of the civil rights movements in the United States and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

It was Cleveland Robinson who served as the administrator chairman of the 1963 March on Washington. In her remarks at his funeral, Mrs. King remembered his long-time support for Dr. King and the civil rights movement, dating back to the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott. Indeed, many in the movement knew that you always could count on Cleveland Robinson for moral and financial support and "troops" when you confronted racism.

It was the same in the anti-apartheid movement, where Cleveland Robinson played a key role in getting labor support of anti-apartheid activities. He helped to organize the 1986 anti-apartheid rally in New York City where nearly a million marched and let our national leaders know they no longer had public support for U.S. backing of a racist regime. For that reason President Nelson Mandela sent a personal message to Robinson's funeral.

Mr. Robinson's contribution to America was powerful, and I would like to take this moment to honor his memory and to mourn our loss.

## TRIBUTE TO TOM LAZZARO

HON. CARRIE P. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of honoring a colleague of mine who is retiring on December 3, 1995. After giving of himself 30 years of continued and dedicated service to the cognitive and affective growth of thousands of students at Miami-Dade Community College, he now seeks a well-deserved retirement from leading and teaching so many of the college's increasing number of prominent alumni.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

My good friend, Tom Lazzaro, is among a rare breed of hardy but compassionate leaders of young folks who found themselves learning both from his wise counsel and disarming compassion. Beginning his career at the college in 1964, he genuinely epitomized the dual role of teacher and coach, becoming one of our Nation's premiere college tennis coaches. Highly respected among his peers, he served as president of the National Junior College Athletic Men's Tennis Coaches Association from 1974–1994. He was inducted into three different halls of fame: the National Junior College Athletic Association Men's Tennis in 1992, the Dade County Tennis in 1995 and the Florida Community College Activities Association in this same year.

As the Miami-Dade Community College's north campus tennis coach, he led the Falcon netters for 30 seasons, compiling an astounding .619 career winning percentage of 356 wins and 219 losses. During that time, the Falcon tennis team won three consecutive national championships in 1966, 1967 and 1968, finishing as national runners-up three times and winning seven Florida State tennis titles.

Known throughout Florida as a coach extraordinaire and personal confidante of many a student-athlete at the college, Mr. Lazzaro developed 13 junior college all-American tennis players and went out of his way to obtain for 30 athletes scholarships to various 4-year institutions. It is this commitment to the future success of his students that endeared him to the hundreds of young athletes who chose to learn not only the athletic demands to which they were subjected but also prepared them to pursue with excellence the academic requirements toward furthering their education.

During his teaching career at the college, this native of Hialeah instructed north campus students in health education, tennis, and nautilus training. Married for 42 years, Tom will now enjoy a much-deserved retirement with his wife Joan, along with his seven children and the other grandchildren that make up the burgeoning Lazzaro clan.

#### HONORING MS. ETHEL HAWS GREEN ON HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JULIAN C. DIXON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mr. DIXON. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Ms. Ethel Haws Green on the occasion of her 100th birthday, Saturday December 2, 1995.

Born Alma Ethel Haws on December 2, 1895, in Del Valle, TX, Ethel began her education in the rural schools of Del Valle. She would later obtain her high school diploma from Los Angeles High School, attend Tillotson College, and earn a certificate in fashion design from Los Angeles Trade Tech School. Following the death of her mother, Ethel withdrew from college to assist her father in raising her eight sisters and brothers. While helping to care for her siblings, she worked as a school teacher in Forney, TX.

Ethel's career took many turns as she helped support her family. After leaving Del Valle she worked in Dallas, TX as a waitress and in Chicago, IL as a housekeeper with the

Southern Pacific Railroad. While working for the railroad Ethel studied cosmetology, earning her license as a cosmetologist and a promotion from housekeeper to beautician. It was here that she would meet her husband, Richard "Pap" Green, who worked as a clerk with the U.S. Postal Service. Ethel and Richard were married in September of 1928 and lived happily together for 55 years.

Mr. and Mrs. Green moved to Los Angeles, CA shortly after they were married. In Los Angeles Ethel began working in a beauty shop. At the shop Ethel met Gladys Owens, with whom she opened her own beauty shop on historic Central Avenue. Several years later, Gladys moved to Chicago and Ethel became the sole proprietor of the establishment. While operating the beauty shop she had the privilege of working with such stars as Lena Horne, Eartha Kitt, and Catherine Dunham. During her career Ethel also worked as a seamstress and a businesswoman. Upon her husband's retirement Ethel spent a decade in the rest home business.

Although Ethel maintained a busy career, she always found time to contribute to her community. Ethel has given direction and made financial contributions to many organizations which provide scholarships to deserving youngsters, such as the Alpha Wives Auxiliary Scholarship Fund, the Cecil Murray Education Center, the Tillotson College Scholarship Fund, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She continues to participate in a number of civic and social organizations, sharing with them her humor, insight, courage, and love of humankind.

Mr. Speaker, Ethel Haws Green is an inspiration to us all. I ask that you and my colleagues join me in recognizing this wonderful and gracious lady on her 100th birthday.

#### THANK YOU, DON SMRECAK

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, grand events often start from small ones, and keeping them grand requires a special skill. Over the years the Munger Potato Festival has grown from a local event attracting area residents to one which today boasts over 42,000 people who over a 4-day period celebrate the importance of potatoes to the local economy with a carnival, contests, wonderful food, and memories galore. Don Smrecak has served as the chairman of the festival for 10 years, and his tenure will always be fondly remembered.

During his term, the festival grew to its present size. He created a special Kids Day, when children age 5 to 12 are able to participate in games free of charge. Every participant wins a prize for being involved. This follows his work on the parade committee for several years which helped make this parade one of the most attractive of all area events.

Don has been a member of the Munger Volunteer Firemen Corps, the sponsoring organization for the festival, for over 20 years. He continues to serve on various festival committees, as well as serving as the finance chairman of St. Norbert Church in Munger.

Don and his wife Lori have two children, who have been blessed in their family to see

the value of giving to one's community. What better lesson could we ask our young people to learn than the importance of being involved as a volunteer to help make your home town an even better place? The Munger Potato Festival has done this by providing an important source of funding for recreational activities and facilities that are used throughout the year in Munger and Merritt Township.

Mr. Speaker, when a town of 1,700 is visited by 42,000, a major impact is felt. The Munger Potato Festival has been vitally important in helping to provide resources to a wonderful small community, and it is because of dedicated, willing people, like Don Smrecak. I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in thanking Don for his years of service to his community.

#### BUDGET RECONCILIATION

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, November 29, 1995*

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, November 29, 1995, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

#### WHY I OPPOSED THE GINGRICH BUDGET PLAN

Earlier this month, the House considered two different budget reconciliation plans that would balance the federal budget in seven years. The first plan, proposed by Speaker Gingrich, was approved by the House and Senate, but vetoed by President Clinton. I opposed this version. The second plan, drafted by a group of conservative Democrats known as the "Coalition", was defeated by the House. I supported this version.

Congress is taking serious steps to address the budget deficit. I support a balanced budget and a line-item veto and have voted for a balanced budget amendment to the U.S. Constitution. I will continue to urge the President and my colleagues in Congress to reach a bipartisan agreement to balance the budget in seven years.

The Gingrich plan.—This budget plan includes the following major provisions:

#### HEALTH CARE CUTS

The plan would cut back an estimated \$270 billion from projected spending in the Medicare program. It would increase Part B premiums paid by beneficiaries; cut back payments to hospitals and doctors; and give beneficiaries a wider choice of health insurance options. The plan also would cut back an estimated \$170 billion from the federal share of Medicaid by converting it into a capped block grant to the states, limited the amount of federal funds a state could receive.

#### TAX BREAKS

The Gingrich budget would provide \$245 billion in tax cuts, including: a \$500-per-child tax credit for families with incomes up to \$110,000; an expanded Individual Retirement Account (IRA); and a reduction in taxes on capital gains income. It also would scale back the Earned Income Tax Credit, which benefits the working poor, by \$32 billion.

#### OTHER CUTS

The plan would reduce spending on welfare by \$82 billion by converting the current program into several block grants to the states. It would cut back spending on farm programs by \$13.8 billion by reducing export supports and replacing current programs for